



## PRESS RELEASE

07/24/2007 GAAS:584:07 FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### **Gov. Schwarzenegger Tours Struggling San Diego Reservoir, Discusses Water Plan for Southern California**

In San Diego County today, Governor Schwarzenegger toured the Sweetwater Reservoir, which is at less than 50 percent capacity, to illustrate California's mounting water crisis and call on the Legislature to pass a comprehensive water plan. The Governor's \$5.9 billion plan will provide additional water storage, create conservation and efficiency measures, repair the fragile Delta and lead to the development of a modern conveyance system to reliably supply water to California's growing population and \$32 billion agriculture industry.

In June, the San Diego County Water Authority called on residents to cut their water usage by 20 gallons per day. The Sweetwater Authority has also called for greater conservation and is proposing to raise rates nearly 6 percent in January because of water shortages.

The Sweetwater Reservoir is less than half full, not enough to supply the 180,000 people from West Chula Vista, National City and Bonita, who depend on this facility for a clean, reliable source of drinking water. And this is the same story all over California because right now our water system is extremely vulnerable, said Governor Schwarzenegger.

The Sacramento-San Joaquin Delta supplies water for 25 million people in California, including 18 million in Southern California and San Diego. But a major flood or earthquake could shut off water delivery to Southern California for up to two years. That's why we need a better conveyance system that doesn't put so much pressure on the Delta and its fragile ecosystem.

Building on his Strategic Growth Plan from last year, the Governor introduced a \$5.9 billion comprehensive water plan in January. The Governor's plan invests \$4.5 billion to develop additional surface and groundwater storage, so we can protect communities against flooding and capture water from storms and snowmelt run-off to supply cities, farmers and business with water during drought conditions. The plan also includes \$1 billion toward restoration of the Delta, including development of a new conveyance system, \$250 million to support restoration projects on the Klamath, San Joaquin and Sacramento rivers and the Salton Sea project and \$200 million for grants to California communities to help conserve water for about 400,000 families.

Southern California relies on imported water for more than 60 percent of its drinking and agricultural supplies. Between 2000 and 2006, the Metropolitan Water District of Southern California received 36 percent of its total supplies from the Delta. Over the same period, Southern California received 20 percent of its supplies from the Colorado River. The Colorado River Basin is

in its eighth consecutive year of drought conditions.

This summer, drought conditions are causing water districts statewide to call for people to voluntarily cut their usage by ten percent. Two districts in Sonoma and Santa Cruz Counties have implemented mandatory rationing.

The Metropolitan Water District of Southern California, which provides water to 18 million people from Ventura County in the north to San Diego County in the south, is calling for users to reduce water consumption.

If we had storage capacity during the wet winter a year ago like the two reservoirs I have proposed, we could have captured and stored enough water to supply millions of households for a year, continued the Governor. Instead, that water just disappeared into the ocean.

The Governor has proclaimed a State of Emergency in both Kings and Riverside Counties due to the drought.

As a result of California's last drought between 1987 and 1992, farmers suffered an \$800 million economic loss and Californians paid \$500 million more for energy as utilities were forced to substitute hydroelectric power with other, more expensive forms of energy. Among the numerous industries that were impacted, the landscape and gardening industry lost \$460 million and cut 5,600 jobs.

Also as a result of the last major drought, the San Diego County Water Authority cut water deliveries to all customers by 31 percent for one year in 1991.

Last week, the Governor called for immediate actions to help fix the Delta, which is at risk of failing as a reliable water source. Climate models and current weather patterns require that we prepare for more severe floods, droughts and rising sea levels, which the Delta must be able to withstand to protect California's water supply.

The Governor has directed the Delta Vision Blue Ribbon Task Force to develop a Delta management plan. The task force will present its findings and recommendations by January 1, 2008 and its Strategic Plan by October 31, 2008. The Bay Delta Conservation Plan is also underway, being developed with broad participation from water agencies, environmental organizations and local representatives. The \$1 billion proposed in the Governor's comprehensive plan will be used to fund their recommendations.